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VADE MECUM, VOLVENTIBUS ANNIS

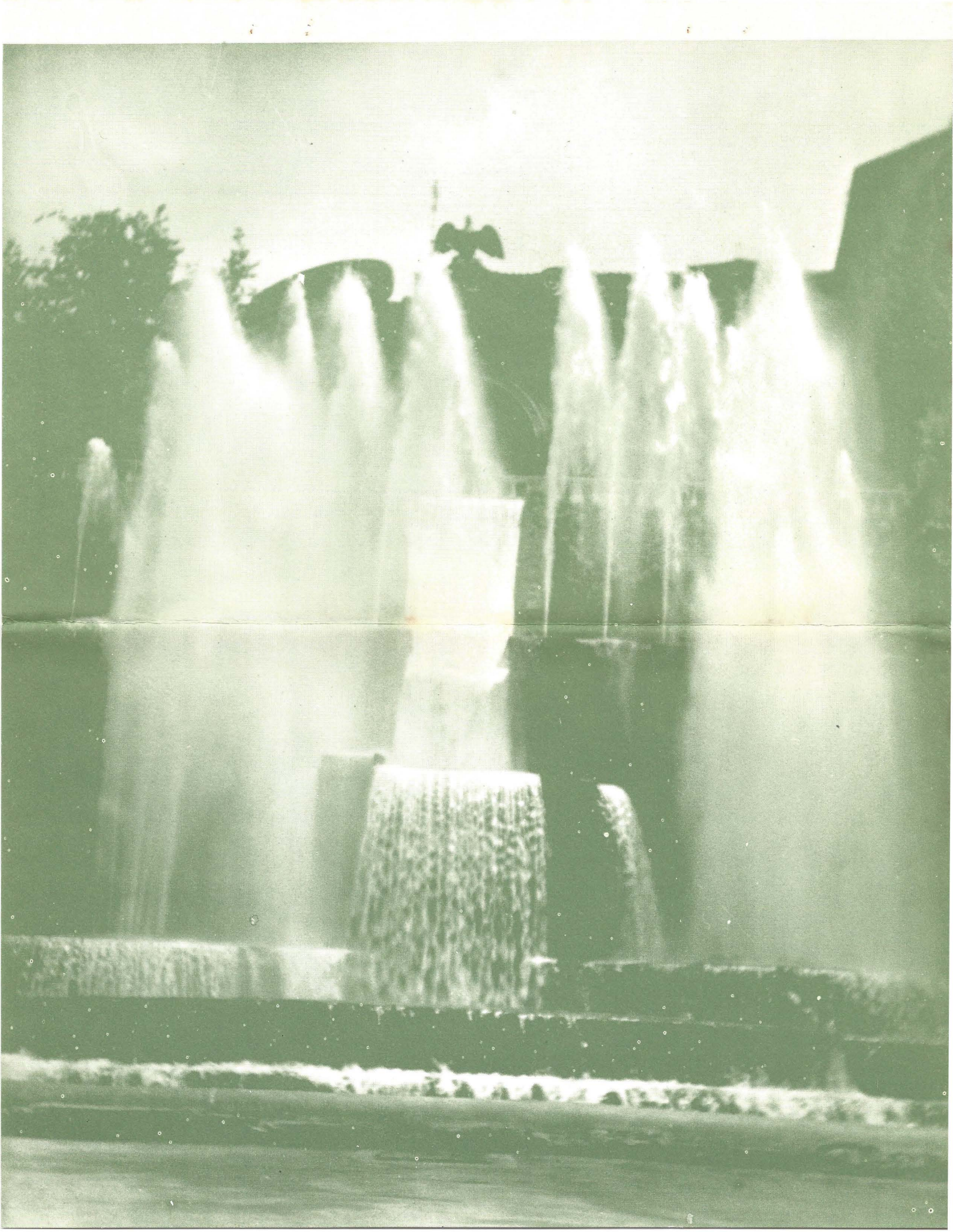
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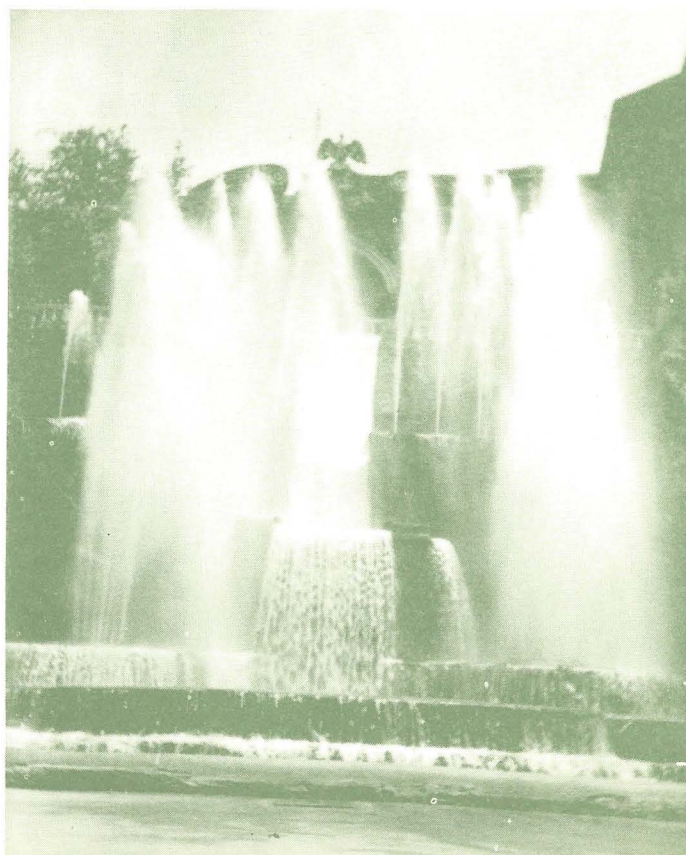
THE MAYANS
SAN ANTONIO,
TEXAS

Number 179

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Fountains at Tivoli, Villa d' Este
Photo by Rose Dawn

... I will give unto him that is athirst of
the fountain of the water of life freely.
Revelations: 21-6

THE MAXIMUM LIVING SERIES
Mayan Revelation Number 179
DO WHAT YOU CAN'T

An Old Epitaph

Four Kinds of People

**Things That Couldn't
Be Done**

Mustness

Loss or Gain?

Three Necessities

Points on Method

Meditation

Beloved Centurion:

As this lesson is prepared for you and the other members of your class, the feeling persists that there are some in this class who have obstacles which they are having difficulty to overcome, and many have reached the point where they honestly feel that they cannot cope with what is facing them.

This lesson, DO WHAT YOU CAN'T, is written for those people, and if only one member of the class should find the answer to his or her problem, I would feel well rewarded. However, it is my hope that the subject we are covering in this lesson will be a great help to many in the class, if not all. That is the aim of your instructor and your Mayan Order.

What we say in these instructions is true, although you may sometimes find it difficult to accept the statements which we make when we tell you that you CAN DO what you would like to do - you CAN at all times accomplish your aims. We are not talking about something which has not been experienced from many directions. We know the truth of the principles which we endeavor to impart to our students.

In the words which are to follow in this lesson, you will find much to meditate upon and I hope you will do so thoughtfully. Please do not read this lesson hurriedly, but think about it, make the most of it, and above all determine you are going to put the principles given you to work in your own life, with absolute confidence that the instructions can be used successfully.

Without further ado let us proceed with the lesson, beginning, as is our custom, with the prayer for accomplishment. It follows:

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, to speak of doing what I can't

Makes daring words,

But Thine is a daring faith,

And Thy people through the centuries

Have done daring and seemingly impossible things in Thy name.

I now step fully out into the sunlit vista

Of the great adventure of Faith,

Knowing Thou wilt not fail me.

Amen.

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AN OLD EPITAPH

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THE proposal that heads this lesson looks and sounds preposterous, as much so as the earlier proposition that you can lift yourself by your bootstraps. There is good evidence that both are true, but there is good evidence that this one at least had serious consideration and a practical test before it was ever mentioned here. So let us consider it on its merits - as applied to you.

A man of high honor and world-recognized scholarship, a teacher and friend of your instructor, is authority for the statement that in a certain New England graveyard a woman lies buried under a monument bearing this inscription:

"SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULDN'T"

This woman had evidently made more of the adventure of living than even the woman in the New Testament of whom it was so proudly said:

"SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD"

Anyone can do what he can. Only those who know the secret and how to use it can do what they can't. There are no such people? Oh yes there are!

Whoever this New England woman was, it is plain that her life impressed the people of the community very strongly. What means even more, she must have made a deep impression on her own family who knew her life best, for after all they had to devise, or at least approve, this sweeping and confident epitaph. She would not have been a woman who did the actually impossible, for she evidently did what was good and right, and no good or right thing is really impossible. She must have been a person who had the courage and persistence to attempt things regarded as impossible and accomplishing them with the help of God. Probably no one was more surprised at this than herself.

In all this she could not have been very different from what you, or any of us, may be. Almost anything looks difficult when we see it from afar. After we have considered the problems involved, most things really look impossible. Turning away at that point is where we make our mistake and take our loss. Who knows whether an untried thing is impossible or not? Too many people give up and retreat, saying the thing cannot be done. But probably it can be done, and will be done when someone comes along with the necessary courage and will, - maybe you.

On a highway, when we reach the top of a hill and look at the next hill leading up out of the valley, that next hill looks very high and forbidding, and the road to its top looks very long and steep. But as we descend the first hill and approach the foot of that seemingly impossible climb it shortens and flattens down till the ascent is not difficult at all. The tasks, responsibilities, and undertakings of life are like that. From a distance they look hard and forbidding, but on nearer approach the seeming impossibility fades away, and soon we find ourselves doing what we were sure we couldn't.

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FOUR KINDS OF PEOPLE

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WITH reference to accomplishing things, like a program of self-improvement, or a life work, or some special project, or even just getting over the hump of the present day, there are four kinds of people whose lives, if they continue as they are going, will work out in four different kinds of ways. They are the can't people, the can people, the try people, and the do people.

The can't people do not require much time and attention here because they do not change anything. They are the "extras" in the play whose mission is to wear a costume and take up space. All they do is give up without trying. They surrender before they have even been asked to. They are like engines with no fire under the boilers. Nothing of any consequence would ever be done if everyone were like them. If these "fraidy" cats of the world had predominated we would still be in the Stone Age, if indeed we had been able to get that far. Do not be one.

The can people are a few steps ahead of the can't people, but not many. They are better, but not good enough. They are always sure they can do things, the most difficult and baffling things, but they never do them. They have every confidence in themselves, but they never demonstrate it. They walk up to tasks that perplex the wisest and strongest, then they walk away again. They think they can do anything, but it is not safe to trust them with it because they never follow through. Everything, no matter how hard, looks easy to them. They are like the steamboat of which Abraham Lincoln said that it had such a big whistle and such a little engine that every time the whistle blew the engine stopped. They are long on promising and short on delivery, long on boasting and short on achievement. Do not be one of them.

The try people go a little further, but still not far enough. They attack problems and undertakings with vigor and enthusiasm, but soon give out. They begin things, but do not finish them. As soon as the going gets hard they give up and quit. Now and then they accomplish something, if it is easy, and does not take long, and involves no problems; but they never follow through anything that takes real purpose and endurance. Do not be one of them.

The do people are careful what they undertake, but what they undertake they finish. If the going gets hard they set their teeth and go on. If the situation looks hopeless, they consider that all the more reason for holding on. They undertake only what they consider should be done, and having once accepted the responsibility they never swerve from their purpose. If it takes extreme exertion, or patient planning, or exhausting strategy, or great sacrifice, or long periods of time, that makes no difference. They start and keep going, which always leads somewhere. Moses was one of them. He undertook his task with great reluctance, but once having undertaken it he made it his major interest for forty years and only released it from the relaxing hand of death.

BE ONE OF THESE. THEY ARE THE PEOPLE WHO CHANGE THE WORLD, CREATE PROGRESS, WRITE HISTORY, AND MAKE DESTINY SMILE. THEY DO WHAT THEY CAN'T.

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THINGS THAT COULDN'T BE DONE

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THINK over the past as you know it and consider the things that couldn't be done, but nevertheless were done. You will learn from them that most of the claiming that this or that can't be done is by people who do not really know anything about it, or do not want to go to the trouble of doing it themselves. To some minds improvement, success, achievement, and progress, are only things not to have to bother about. They do not object to fortune's coming their way - if they do not have to furnish the motive power.

To refer to Moses again, Israel could not be rescued from generations of slavery in Egypt, and started on the way to being an independent and historic people, and Moses couldn't do the leading. But Israel was so led, and Moses did do the leading. The first few books of the Old Testament will tell you it wasn't easy, but it wasn't impossible either.

No human being could circumnavigate the earth and find new continents on the western side of it. People of the Eastern Hemisphere were thoroughly convinced of that - all but one. Some looked on Columbus as a kind of offender for thinking about such things and disturbing the people from their easy-going ways by wanting to investigate the matter. The threshold of new lands could not be found, but he found it. Ships could not be sailed around the earth, but venturesome spirits came who sailed them. What is the difference whether a thing is possible or not - if someone does it? It is like the way Columbus proved that an egg can be made to stand on end by rapping one sharply on the table and cracking the shell. There is always a way if one has the necessary imagination.

Thomas A. Edison spent most of his life doing things that couldn't be done. A machine that could speak couldn't be made, but he made it. Nor was it so difficult when once one knew what sound is and how it is caused and perceived. It was only a matter of getting little hills and dales on some substance that would produce vibrations and a horn that would amplify them for the ear. But of course they had to be the right vibrations. That could be arranged by having the little dents made by the sounds to be reproduced later. Impossible? Of course, but look what happened and what has grown out of it since.

In that same little laboratory at Menlo Park, New Jersey, Edison worked long and patiently with another impossibility - an electric light. He had to find a filament that an electric current would light up inside a vacuum bulb without burning it up, something that could be made hot enough to burn but wouldn't burn. You see, that was God's problem too in the miracle of the burning bush that called Moses from herding sheep to herding people who were much harder to manage than sheep. Well, Edison tried everything he could think of, including a whisker from the railroad station agent's red beard. At last he found that a fine strand of carbon would do it. It couldn't be done, but it was, and has been marvelously developed as time has gone on.

These are just a few of the more notable cases, but time is full of others. Many of them are simple and not widely known, but they illustrate the point just as well. We all come at times to forbidding barriers. They look impossible, but there is some way to surmount them each and every one.

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MUSTNESS

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LIKE the mainspring in a watch or the power plant in an automobile, there has to be some kind of an activating energy in accomplishing things. Back of the motion must be a motor, and back of the motor must be a dynamo where the force is actually generated. In mechanics the source of power is some physical mechanism, but in the motivation of human endeavors it has to be some power of the spirit.

You will invariably find that in the process of undertaking things and keeping at them till results are achieved the activating force is the same. Though it may take differing forms of expression, the power itself is always a feeling, deep, haunting, and persistent, that the things must be done, and that the person who has the feeling in his soul is the one who must do it. When that feeling gets under way, there is no getting away from it. It follows one much more persistently than his own shadow. It is an honor to anyone to have that feeling. It is a sign that he has been chosen for a definite mission, for something he alone must do. Some call this haunting, insisting something the feeling of mustness.

It was the secret of the marvelous life and work of Jesus of Nazareth. We may say He was sent of God to demonstrate divinity and accomplish world redemption, but what made him always conscious of this mission and faithfully committed to it? It was the feeling of mustness that did it. From the day when as a young boy he insisted that he must be about his Father's business to the tragic time when he insisted that he must go to Jerusalem to be crucified we find him constantly announcing that he must do this or that. It was a feeling that left no choice. In the choice between duty and escape it was and is that feeling that decides the issue.

It has been the same with all the others who, whether they became famous or not, at least kept their lives on the upswing. It will be the same with you. If you get an inescapable feeling that a thing must be done and that you must do it, it can be done, and if you are faithful it will be done, no matter what anyone says. You have to learn to be as determined as is Destiny itself.

This feeling of mustness can be a troublesome thing, but it is a redemptive one. Be assured that it will hold you to your course, often when you might wish to be excused. Those who have had it have not known much rest from that time on. It has its price, but it also has its compensations. It is not for the making of idlers but of heroes. It is not for the weak, but for the strong. If it comes and knocks at the hearts of the selfish, they must either refuse it or cease to be selfish. A little voice saying "must" has no weapons and does no violence, but if you can, overcome it. If you resist till it leaves you, you will wish in vain for its return.

You may find this feeling of mustness boring away at you without notice, but you are more likely to get it by liking something. As you might love a dear one you come to love a purpose, a cause, a people, God. Look out for this mysterious compulsion. It may lead you through a wilderness, but it will bring you to glory.

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LOSS OR GAIN?

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THINK what the world has lost at the hands of those of little faith through all they lacked the courage to do. Think of the dreams that have been snuffed out by those of no vision and imagination. Think of the aspiring souls that have been discouraged from attempting what would have blessed the race, discouraged till they aspired no more. Think of the loss occasioned by people who have gone about putting out candles others had had the courage to light. Perhaps dreams and hopes in your own life have been crushed before they had time to grow by your lack of faith or that of others who influenced you. Do you not see that the loss to all concerned has been simply incalculable?

How many of those who have achieved great things in their lives and in the world have had to do so in the face of bitter discouragement, and how many others have had to go forward at least without any encouragement! How much one takes on himself to say that someone else is foolish to dream of doing anything better than he is doing or being anything better than he is! How much one takes on himself to beat down a plan in a human soul to do some good and worthwhile thing! Always far greater things have been done with far less to do them with when people undertook them who believed in them and trusted in God and themselves to do them.

Not all the noble dreams that flower within us are destroyed by others. Sometimes we destroy our own by taking the attitude that this or that would be a very fine thing indeed, but it is not for us. We lack the power to do it or obtain it, is our conclusion, as if there were no God in heaven, and as if we were not created in the divine image of wisdom and power.

It is a saddening picture when we think on what the world, and time, and we have lost. It would not be worthwhile to view it were it not that it might startle some of us into resolving that it shall not be made any worse than it is, that the loss is great enough and shall not be made greater at least by us. When we have done that it is time to turn from it to something more hopeful.

So for a moment let us look at the positive side, the constructive side, the possibility side. What has been so tragically lost may not be lost forever. Some of the things that might have been, and are not, may yet be. Something that might have been done, and was not, may yet be accomplished. What might have been for you, and was not, may yet be brought from failure to success. All this, provided you will stay in the ranks of the hopeful and believing, and keep your attitudes constructive and courageous.

We could have had all the destroyers of human welfare and happiness overcome by now. We could have had the day of peace and good will ushered in. We could have had science and learning wholly devoted to bettering the conditions of mankind. We could have had selfishness and corruption in public affairs overcome. We could have had the hearts of the race united in worship and its hands in service.

We can have these things yet if our dreamers will believe enough in

their dreams to build their patterns into reality, if those who feel the great compulsion will go fearlessly forward on the road opened to them. No doubt you can be among them, so never let a good purpose die from starvation and neglect.

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THREE NECESSITIES

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WE have said that the people who have accomplished great things in the world, within their lives or outside them, the masters, leaders, and saviours of mankind, have been those who became actuated by the spirit of mustness, and who have let that spirit have sway in their lives. Now let us go on to say that this spirit of mustness, which is only another name for the sense of duty and obligation, is conditioned by three great necessities. In other words, there are three things we must do to deal successfully with a life possibility, and thus move confidently up the way to excellence, achievement and success. Here they are:

First, one must greatly desire the fulfillment he seeks. Deep in his heart he must want the thing done. His happiness depends upon it. One does not dedicate his best years and his precious strength to a project unless its possibility has won his imagination and thrilled his soul. We follow wonder, and to thrill one with the desire for it a thing must seem wonderful. When this is true he thinks of it much, and every time he thinks of it his heart says that this must be. No one can explain why and how a cause can become so precious to one who may not be personally much concerned about it. But it happens, and when it does that is the beginning of another march to victory. You will not win in a cause or an interest you do not love and the fulfillment of which you do not desire.

Second, one must believe tremendously in what he seeks. This should not be difficult, for as a rule we believe in what we love. People advance only the causes, win only the victories, and win only the goals they believe in. The great and good of the past have done the monumental things they did because they had their faith bound up in them. They believed in them whether others did or not. The ridicule of others made their crosses and sacrifices harder to bear, but it did not halt their efforts. Those who go forward in any important way must expect sometimes to have to tread the winepress alone.

Third, one must keep trying. Having chosen a way, found that he loves it, and knows he believes in it, there must be no turning back. It may sometimes seem hard to keep trying, but we find that it isn't very hard, for love and faith have great driving power, and they help us on. You will not need to go far to discover this when once you have taken to yourself a purpose you know is worth your best. The people who start and stop have failed in the first two necessities - love and faith. They were not sufficiently committed to the purpose in their hearts and minds.

As was once said to God's people, "This is the way; walk ye in it." Along this road you will learn something of the way things can be done, and what is the measure both of human strength and the help available to it. Along this

road you can if you will find yourself performing that amazing feat - succeeding in doing what you thought you couldn't, and what others may have continued to think you couldn't even after you had found you could.

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POINTS ON METHOD

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IN closing this lesson we will again gather up a few points not covered or not sufficiently covered thus far about this matter of doing the apparently impossible. So much is included in each of these lessons that you cannot either master all the theory or carry out all the practice at once. You will need to take them up item by item and point by point, and work with each one till you have mastered that much. Here are a few principles to observe:

- (1) Test things in action. Remember that you will never know whether a thing is possible till you have tried it out, perhaps done so repeatedly. Many things that look difficult are not so at all. The hinges on the doors to great things do not turn any harder than those on doors to the unimportant; that is, unless they may have grown rusty from disuse. Do not aim too low. Reach for the highest star. You may not touch it, but you will stretch taller.
- (2) Always make at least one more try before you give up and quit. Few ballplayers bat home runs the first time they swing the bat. If a golfer makes a hole-in-one a few times in a lifetime he is doing well, and if one does it the first time he swings a club, it is definitely an accident. Success is usually won after repeated efforts, repeated perhaps to the point of discouragement. Most of the important achievements of history have been accomplished only after many threats of failure and sometimes many moments of despair. But just beyond that moment of despair may wait victory. Every American should be grateful that Christopher Columbus and George Washington did not give up when everything went against them and their causes seemed to be doomed.
- (3) Despair is often failure's last effort to defeat you. Our lives are like tales that are told. The greatest crisis is the herald of the near approach of the climax and final victory of the right side in the conflict. It is literally true in life and action that the darkest hour is just before the dawn. Instead of despairing at that point, we should feel our hopes rise and grow stronger.
- (4) Don't let difficulties discourage you nor be surprised when you meet them. Like the villain, they are part of the show, and a part doomed to defeat unless you give them so important a place that you enable them to survive. Reread John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, which has even more point now than when it was first written. Give special thought to the Giant Despair and to Doubting Castle.

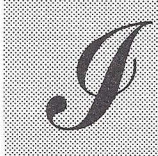
(5) Do not talk about your plans and purposes till after they have been accomplished. Then you won't need to, for they will speak for themselves. There are two reasons for this. Consider them well, and be on your guard. The first is that for some reason talking about a project tends to weaken the will and scatter the forces of decision. The second is that many of the people you tell it to will discourage you, and some of their unfaith will get into your own heart, weaken your morale, and prevent your victory. Remember Lincoln's steamboat. Leave the whistle alone and keep the engine going.

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MEDITATION

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 have now looked squarely into the face of so-called impossibility, and found that it is not the fearsome thing I had thought. It is not impossibility at all, for when I cease to fear it it disappears. I will therefore freely and fearlessly undertake what is laid on my heart to do, knowing that if God has willed it it is not impossible.

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